

Changes of the Rose

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Summary: A moving Kodachi POV piece - takes place a few years after 'Changes of the Sword'

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By Kyle Emmerson

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People have wondered about me. It was not until recently that I had realized why, but they had.

Perhaps it was soon after my brothers death. Perhaps it was during. Who knows? The point remains, that it happened.

The Black Rose had died, and only Kodachi Kuno remained.

The events leading to the death of my brother belong in another story, this however, is mine.

Long ago, in a much quieter neighbourhood than this, there lived a family. A family of one mother, one father, one sister and one brother.

Surprising how little it takes to send all of that crashing down.

There was something different about me. Seperate from the tortures both my father and brother had endured. I was the youngest in the family. I had lost my mother at the age of twelve, but it didn't hit me until months later. Months later, when The Black Rose came to

surface.

I don't really know how it started, per se. It just happened. Piece by piece, Kodachi Kuno was becoming non- existant, until the eventual point where The Black Rose had taken complete control.

Soon afterwards, I lost my brother to the madness. Little did I know then, that the madness would consume him.

The day that The Black Rose met Ranma Saotome was actually the re-emergence of Kodachi. Most people believe Kodachi returned after the shock of losing a brother to Seppuku of all things. No. In a Black Rose state of mind, Kodachi Kuno latched on to Ranma Saotome. I saw him as an escape. The only way to rid myself of The Black Rose, but The Black Rose was the one who had latched onto him in the first place.

Years had passed before Kodachi had completely returned.

I do believe that Ranma was the trigger, but I believe the death of my brother was the explosion. I can still remember holding the sword in my hand, hesitating for a moment, nearly ready to drop the sword, cradle my brother in my arms and hope he would live. But it was too late. I had promised my brother. And I believe I did him a favour. He would not have lived much longer before he had taken his full life by his own hand.

And I saved him the dishonour of doing so. I can vividly remember the feeling of the family katana passing through the flesh of his neck and throat. I can still hear the grotesque thump as his head had hit the floor. I can still feel the blood on my hand and face.

And then the police arrived. It was something I would have preferred not to have dealt with, but it had to be done. And it was.

Tatewaki Kuno had never existed.

Oh but he did. And he still does, in the heart of Kodachi Kuno. Not the Black Rose. Not the evil botanist woman that Kodachi once was, but Kodachi herself.

I will always remember my brother.

Years have passed since that incident. Ranma and Akane often visit me, to share old times. I can see the sadness in both of them whenever Tatewaki's name was brought up.

I bear them no ill will. Tatewaki took his life by his own choice, and they were the ones dishonoured by he. I see them as friends. They see me similarly.

But they come, they visit. Akane is pregnant now, after being married for two years. It's about time, I must say. Since I had accepted the loss of Ranma--... No, wait. Not a loss. I never had him to begin with.

Once I had accepted their feelings for one another, I found it remarkably easy to feel good for them. To hope for their lives to take a better turn than I or my brothers did.

Years have passed, and I still find myself longing for something. I don't know if I will ever understand what that something could be, but I hope I will. And I hope some day I can fill that void.

I think the void is Tatewaki, to tell the truth. I can always guess, but never identify.

From time to time, I can feel The Black Rose returning. My solitude seems to bring her back. Just last month, I found myself laughing maniacally... THAT laugh, at my own face in the mirror.

I had to return to the hospital after that. I just got back yesterday.

Don't misunderstand, I'm not forced to go to the hospital. I go of my own free will. I know I will never be truly rid of The Black Rose, but I can suppress her. I can prevent her from ever taking dominance over the life of Kodachi Kuno again.

And apparently, as I've found out yesterday, there are others. Friends that are willing to help.

Had I known that the people in my life were so caring, so thoughtful, I would have never let The Black Rose take control.

Yesterday, Akane visited me in the hospital. Ranma, as well. We had a nice cup of tea and talked of things. Of everything.

We spoke of Akane's pregnancy. The baby was kicking, I heard.

We spoke of the latest quest to find a 'cure' for Ranma's curse. It's funny. I don't see it as a curse, in any respect. I see it as a blessing. But then, that would be my opinion.

And finally, we spoke of me. We spoke of my progress in the hospital, and we spoke of the regressions I suffer at home.

And then, they offered. They offered me something that nobody, not even my servants or doctors have ever offered me.

They offered me a home. A real home, with a real family. To live with friends as though they were family.

The eldest Tendo daughters had long since moved from the Tendo home. That meant two empty rooms. One was being transformed into a nursery, and the other... was offered to me.

I was speechless. Here, the two people I found I cared most about in the world offered me a home. A real home, after all I'd done to them.

My mind often wanders on me. Some parts tell me it's merely pity. But it didn't stop me from accepting.

And accept it, I did. And I soon found that the void in my life was feeling more full.

They were accepting *ME*. Kodachi Kuno, into their family.

That brings me to where I am now. I pick up the last of my things

from my bedroom, and then walk out the door. That would be the last time I ever set foot in it.

And now, I walk towards the front entrance, ready to leave the 'home' I've lived in for all my life.

And then, one of the servants attract my attention. He runs up to me, holding something in his hand.

'Mistress Kodachi!' He yells. 'You forgot this!'

I am content in the fact that the servants will not become unemployed. My father still lives at the mansion, and he has more use for the servants. He has since regained his sanity after Tatewaki's death.

I soon recognize the object in the servant's hand.

It is my ribbon. My old gymnastics ribbon.

I sigh as I speak. 'I have no need of it,' I tell him. 'return it to the room, and place it next to the other reminders. In one day, take all that is in that room and place it in the yard.'

The servant looked confused for a moment.

'Burn it. All of it.'

I turn away, and continue walking. To my new home. A home I feel I can remain happy in.

'Auntie Kodachi' The little ones would call me. Who knows, perhaps some day I would bear little ones of my own.

But, although the doctors say I will never be rid of The Black Rose, I feel hopeful, that through friendship and family. My new family, that one of those 'medical miracles' would happen.

I walk down the road to my new home, and I cry. Not from grief, but happiness. And I cry even harder once I realize, that I have never once cried from happiness.

I am Kodachi Kuno. I am no longer alone.

End
file.